

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION



PRESS RELEASE

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Higher Education Commission Releases Report on Training Nurses to Meet the State's Shortage

February 6, 2003 – Sacramento -- The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) released at its meeting on February 4, 2003 a report that will help policy makers examine more efficient and effective ways of training Registered Nurses in California. "California is facing a severe nursing shortage," said Robert L. Moore, the Commission's Executive Director. "This report makes several recommendations to policy makers on how to best identify those students most likely to graduate from community college nursing programs, pass the licensing exam, and enter the workforce as nurses," he said.

California colleges and universities educate about half of the State's Registered Nurses – the remainder are educated in other states or in foreign countries. Community colleges train nearly two-thirds of nurses educated in the State. "Community colleges play a critical role in educating our nurse workforce, in addition to the roles played by the University, State University, and independent colleges and universities," said Alan Arkatov, the Commission's Chairman. "It is imperative that nurse education programs are designed in manner to assure student success," he said.

The report, *Admission Policies and Attrition Rates in California Community College Nursing Programs*, is a joint publication of the Commission and the California Policy Research Center (CPRC). Researchers Dr. Joanne Spetz and Dr. Jean Ann Seago of the University of California, San Francisco are its primary authors. The report recommends that the admission processes used by community colleges be redesigned to identify those students who are prepared well enough to succeed in a nursing program. "Currently, some community college nursing programs have drop-out rates of upwards of 70%, and this does not serve the interests of prospective nurses, the health care industry, nor the State," said Senator Charles Poochigian the author of the legislation that required the study.

On February 20, 2003, CPEC and CPRC will hold a legislative briefing in the State Capitol to discuss the report's recommendations. Information on this briefing can be obtained from the contact above.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is on ensuring that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide as many Californians as possible an opportunity to pursue pathways to success through postsecondary education.

The California Policy Research Center (CPRC) is a University of California program that applies the extensive research expertise of the UC system to the analysis, development, and implementation of state policy as well as federal policy on issues of statewide importance.

Further information regarding this report and other issues facing higher education may be obtained through the Commission's website www.cpec.ca.gov. The report may also be obtained from the CPRC website at www.ucop.edu/cprc.

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